



## Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston Marine Safety Information Bulletin 17-21

Date: April 9, 2021  
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### Sector Houston-Galveston Port State Control Hazardous Condition Attestation Update

Sector Houston-Galveston hereby suspends the requirement for vessels to submit an “Attestation of Hazardous Condition” letter prior to receiving clearance for entry into the Houston-Galveston Captain of the Port (COTP) zone. This suspension is applicable to the Houston-Galveston COTP zone only. This Marine Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB), therefore, supersedes Sector Houston-Galveston’s MSIB 17-20: “Hazardous Condition Attestation” dated April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic continues to present a serious public health threat affecting mariners and maritime commerce. As a reminder, and as reiterated in the U. S. Coast Guard’s MSIB 06-20 dated March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, illness of persons on board a vessel shall be reported to ***both*** the Coast Guard and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Title 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) section 71.21, details how the master of a ship destined for a U.S. port shall report *immediately* to the quarantine station at or nearest the port at which the ship will arrive, the occurrence, on board, of any death or any ill person among passengers or crew (including those who have disembarked or have been removed) during the 15-day period preceding the date of expected arrival or during the period since departure from a U.S. port (whichever period of time is shorter). Title 33 CFR sections 160.201 and 160.216, details how the illness of a person onboard a vessel that may adversely affect the safety of a vessel or port is a hazardous condition and requires the owner, agent, master, operator, or person in charge to *immediately* notify the nearest Coast Guard COTP zone.

Failure to report hazardous conditions may result in delays and/or disruptions to passenger and/or cargo operations and initiation of Coast Guard enforcement action, including civil penalties, vessel detentions, and/or criminal liability. Additionally, repeated non-compliance with U.S. illness reporting requirements will prompt reconsideration of the COTP’s suspension of the “Attestation of Hazardous Condition” letter submission requirement for the Houston-Galveston zone.

The U.S. Coast Guard’s Inspections and Compliance Directorate has published a series of MSIBs detailing key maritime issues associated with this pandemic, including but not limited to guidance on compliance with federal drug testing requirements, ballast water management extensions, and crew change issues. Mariners are urged to carefully review all of the Coast Guard’s COVID-19-related MSIBs to ensure their compliance with continuing pandemic response measures. These MSIBs may found at the following [USCG DCO website](#) link under both the “2020” and “2021” tabs. Additionally, the CDC has published an [“Interim Guidance for Ships on Managing Suspected or Confirmed Cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)”](#) that all maritime stakeholders are strongly encouraged to read.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "J. E. Smith".

J. E. SMITH  
Captain, United States Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port